







ELLIOTT. T. GLENNY
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BALLADS FOR BROADBROWS

BALLADS FOR BROADBROWS

BY

A. P. HERBERT

1930

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TO
NIGEL PLAYFAIR

ALL these poems or songs or pieces have appeared in *Punch*, with the exception of "The Talkie-Ruined Home" (printed in the *Daily Mail*) and "Mr. Baedeker" (from "La Vie Parisienne"). My thanks are due to the proprietors of the two papers mentioned. "The Powder Monkeys," "The Song for the Parents of Young Things," "The Sport Song," and the "Lines for a Worthy Person," are taken from an Opera not yet performed ("Tantivy Towers"), the music by Mr. T. F. Dunhill. Mr. Alfred Reynolds has composed music for the "Negro Commercials" (and very moving they are).

A. P. H.

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THE POODLE AND THE PUG

*WHEN I was a High School noodle
And life was rather smug,
My father kept a poodle,
My mother kept a pug ;
And every Sunday, after three,
This strange procession you might see,
My dear Papa, Mamma and me,
The poodle and the pug.*

The poodle I could never bear,
For he was naked here and there,
And, partly bare and partly hair,
Was like a worn-out rug.
The pug, upon the other hand,
Was far too well upholstered, and
Somehow the pug I could not stand—
I could not stand the pug.
Oh, dear, how I disliked those dogs !
The pug had features like a frog's,
And deep in the profoundest bogs
Could I have put that pug.

THE POODLE AND THE PUG

*For every Sunday, after three,
This strange procession you might see,
My dear Papa, Mamma and me,
The poodle and the pug.*



The poodle was alert and gay,
He liked to run in front and play
In quite a Continental way,
Unlike the pompous pug ;
The pug was more the Saxon kind,
He plodded on a mile behind
And in his movements called to mind
An alderman, or slug.
And that explains the life I led,
For it was I who, rather red,
Pursued the poodle, far ahead,
Or waited for the pug.
*And every Sunday, after three,
This strange procession you might see,
My dear Papa, Mamma and me,
The poodle and the pug.*

Those dogs have left their mark on me ;
 So many citizens I see
 A sort of poodle seem to be,

Or else a sort of pug.

At ballets of the Russian kind
 Whole packs of poodles you will find,
 With tufts of hair stuck here and there

Which one would like to tug ;
 While as for pugs, if you reflect,
 You know a dozen, I expect ;
 Well, Mrs. Bun at Number One

Is definitely pug.

*And you, when you go beddy-bye,
 Look in your mirror, eye to eye,
 And put the question, " Which am I—
 A poodle or a pug ?"*



I cannot tell upon what grounds
 I sing of these unpleasant hounds ;
 The Muse proceeds by leaps and bounds,
 One follows with a shrug.

But this is what occurs to me—
Degraded though the age may be,
At any rate we seldom see

A poodle or a pug.

Our ways would make our fathers weep,
Our skirts too short, our drinks too deep ;
But, dash it all, we do *not* keep

A poodle or a pug !

*And you, my child, will never be
Compelled on Sundays, after three,
To walk with your Mamma and me,
A poodle and a pug.*



OTHER PEOPLE'S BABIES

A SONG OF KENSINGTON GARDENS

BABIES? It's a gift, my dear; and I should say
I know,
For I've been pushing prams about for forty years
or so;
Thirty-seven babies—or is it thirty-nine?
No, I'm wrong; it's thirty-six—but none of them
was mine.

Other people's babies—

That's my life!

Mother to dozens,

And nobody's wife.

But then it isn't everyone can say

They used to bath the Honourable Hay,

Lord James Montague, Sir Richard Twistle-Thynnes,

Captain Cartlet and the Ramrod twins.

Other people's babies,

Other people's prams,

Such little terrors,

Such little lambs!

Sixty-one today,

And ought to be a granny;

Sixty-one today,

And nothing but a Nanny!

There, ducky, there,

Did the lady stare?

Don't cry! Oh, my!

Other people's babies!

Everybody's told me, dear, since I was seventeen,
I ought to been a mother—what a mother I'd have
been !

Mind you, minding babies isn't everybody's line,
But I wouldn't mind the minding, dear, if I was
minding mine.

Other people's babies

All my life—

Three dozen mothers,

And not one wife.

Of course, it isn't everyone can say

They used to bath the Honourable Hay,

Lord Charles Cobley—had a present from the King—

And now, they tell me, he's a Bright Young Thing.

But forty years of bottles,

Forty years of fits,

Forty years of first teeth,

And here I sits,

Sixty-one today,

Might have been a granny,

Meant for a mother,

And nothing but a Nanny !

There, ducky, there,

Howl if you dare !

Don't cry ! Oh, my !

Other people's babies !

Isn't he a pet, my dear—the spit of Lady Stoop ?
Looks a perfect picture, yes—I nursed him through
the croup ;

But I shall get my notice just as soon as he can crawl—

It's a funny thing to think he won't remember me at all.

Other people's babies,

Nothing to show—

Twelve months' trouble,

And out I go.

Of course, it isn't everyone can say

They used to bath the Honourable Hay,

Lady Susan Sparrow, what was dropped in the pond,

And now, Cook tells me, she's a well-known blonde.

But forty years of croup,

Forty years of frights,

Long, long days, dear,

And short, short nights—

Sixty-one today,

And ought to be a granny.

Pensions for the widows, eh?

But what about the Nanny?

There, ducky, there,

Nannies don't care!

Don't cry! Oh, my!

Other people's babies!

NOCTURNE

THIS party is rather a bore;
I shall go to such parties no more.
Will somebody kind
My overcoat find
And quietly show me the door?



I'm weary of standing about,
Making silly remarks in a shout;
The sandwiches taste
Of photograph-paste,
And now the white wine has run out!
*I shall go to bed early tonight,
I'm feeling a little bit done;
But I like the young lady in white,
And it's only a quarter to one.*

Oh, why do we gather in herds,
Like a lot of excitable birds,
 And chatter and bawl
 About nothing at all
In wholly inaudible words?
There are seventy women and men
In this room, and it holds about ten.
 You heard what I said?
 I am going to bed,
And it's merely a question of "When?"
 I shall go to bed early tonight,
 I'm feeling a little bit blue;
 But I like the young lady in white,
 And it's only a quarter to two.

There are too many people who write,
They're most of them present tonight;
 And how I abhor
 The musical bore
Who has collared the charmer in white!
And as for this girl with a mane,
She gives me a positive pain!
 She talks of James Joyce
 In a bronchial voice,
And I don't want to see her again.
 But I do like the lady in white,
 And I wish she was married to me.
 I shall go to bed early tonight—
 Oh, dear, it's a quarter to three!

There are too many people who paint ;
It's becoming a chronic complaint ;

They're all of them here,

They've finished the beer,

And I think I am going to faint.

But I've met the young lady in white ;

Our talk was exciting but slight :

" Good evening," she said,

" I am going to bed ;

So glad to have met you. Good-night !"

Still, I've met the young lady in white,

And I wish we had met a bit more.

I shall go to bed early tonight—

Oh, gosh ! it's a quarter to four !

“REDUNDANT”

THIS old pub has got to go, they say,
 'Cos it's redundant.
Funny words they use for things today—
 What price “redundant”?
Well, what I want to know,
If a pub has got to go,
There's no harm in saying so—
 But why “redundant”?

Redundant! Redundant! Well, what a silly word!
 “Superfluous,” “A blot upon the scene,”
 “One too many”—see?
 It was all explained to me—
 But where's the harm in saying what you mean?
What's the use of all this education?
Heaven help the poor old British nation
 If the only word we know
 For a pub that's got to go
 Is redundant,
 Redundant,
 Redundyundyundant!

But words like that is useful now and then—
 And so's redundant.
You couldn't have a better name for men—
 They're just redundant;
Bill's acting very base,
But you ought to see his face
When I says with quiet grace,
 “'Ere, you're redundant.”

*Redundant! Redundant! Well, nothing calms him down
Like one of them big mouthfuls out of novels.*



*Tell him he's a brute
And he throws another boot,
But tell him he's redundant and he grovels.
There's something after all in education ;
It helps you in an awkward situation.*

*If you can give a man the bird
With a perfect lady's word
Like redundant,
Redundant,
Redundyundyundyundyundant !*

When you come to think the matter out,
We're all redundant.
There's very few you couldn't do without—
They're just “ redundant ”;
Well, look at Albert Fife,
And look at Albert's wife !
In fact, the whole of life
'S a bit redundant.

*Redundant ! Redundant ! Well, what a useful word !
Seems to fit the neighbours like a glove,
Likewise the little gent
What comes about the rent,
The Taxes and the Government and Love.
Life is one redundant complication
Asking for abrupt elimination.
And what about your beer ?
Get rid of it, my dear—
It's redundant,
Redundant,
It's redundyundyundyundyundyundant !*

THE VITAMINS

(A SCIENTIFIC SONG)

VITAMIN " A "

Keeps the rickets away

And succours the meagre and nervy ;

" B " 's what you lack

If the stomach is slack,

And " C " is the foe of the scurvy ;

So when a man dines

Let him murmur these lines,

Or sure he will live to deplore it—

Just ask yourself " What

Disease have I got,

And which is the vitamin for it ?"

A doctor with a microscope
Was mixing mutton-fat and soap
When what was his surprise to see
A Thing invisible to me
(And I am quite prepared to bet
That no one else has seen it yet).
It showed upon its gentle face
Affection for the human race,
And it is very rare to find
An organism of this kind ;
So, with a microscopic grin,
He christened it a Vitamin.

There are three Vitamins, not four,
I have no doubt there will be more,*
But for the present you and me
Must do the best we can with three.
And Nelson, Raleigh, Drake, St. Paul,
Did fairly well with none at all.
These simple people never knew
The secrets shared by me and you ;
No chemical analysis
Of this and that and that and this
Their hearty dinners did condemn—
They gobbled what was given them ;
But this affects a man's inside,
And all these foolish fellows died.

But you and I, of sterner schools,
Must eat by scientific rules.
You may remember, as a kid,
A fuss about the Proteid,
And at (I think) a later stage
The Calories became the rage ;
The Carbohydrates now and then
Have exercised the learned men,
And whether people took enough
Albuminous and starchy stuff ;
For nothing, we may well conclude,
Is quite so dangerous as food—
In fact, before the doctors call
It's safest not to eat at all.

* Already (they tell me) this prophecy has been fulfilled.

VITAMINS

It is my purpose here to state
That all these views are out of date,
And even surgeons now admit
The little Vitamin is It.
So do not plunge a hasty fork
Into the pickles or the pork,
But telephone to Harley Street,
“Is this a vital thing to eat?”
Before you order what you want—
Tripe, caviare or crème de menthe—
Before you seize and swallow whole
Some luscious bird or fancy sole,
Send for the manager and hiss,
“Is there a Vitamin in this?”

There are no Vitamins in lard,
From bacon they are wholly barred;
In potted meat they are not seen,
Nor olive-oil nor margarine;
In vain your families you cram
With coffee, cocoa, sugar, jam.
I very much regret to add
That tapioca's just as bad.
Nor do I know how we contrive
For years and years to keep alive
When most of what we eat and drink
Would be much better down the sink.

“A”

But courage! In cod-liver oil
The healthy little creatures toil;

And any backward child of mine
Who showed a softness in the spine
Should frequently be fed on that,
With good hard roes and bits of fat,



Fresh butter, cheese and yolk of egg,
Will fortify the infant leg,
For here again are found, they say,
Those vitamins we christen "A";
In cabbage, too, and other greens,
And lettuces (but not in beans).

"B"

But better still for you and me,
Who are not children now, is "B";
His duty, which he does not shirk,
Is just to make the stomach work.
If my supply of "B" is small
My liver does not act at all,
And things go on in my inside
Which never can be ustified.

VITAMINS

Those old philosophers and saints
 Who had mysterious complaints
 And perished on some lonely mount
 In ways for which we can't account—
 The explanation's clear to me,
 They did not get enough of " B ".



Well, " B " occurs in nuts and peas,
 In lentils, beans, and things like these,
 In wholemeal rye and wholemeal wheat,
 And bread which is not fit to eat,
 In roes of fish and some dried fruits
 And milk and yeast and uncooked roots;
 And death, as far as I can see,
 May be preferred to eating " B ".

" C "

But " C " is quite another thing,
 Of " C " with frank delight I sing ;
 For " C " 's the pretty Vitamin
 Who makes and mends that schoolgirl skin,
 And stops it coming out in lots
 Of horrid, horrid little spots.

"C" is the very best excuse
For drinking pints of orange-juice ;
For "C" 's sweet sake fine ladies feed
Upon the radish and the swede.



Tomatoes, salads, lemons, milk,
Keep noble skins as smooth as silk ;
The prettiest girl I ever saw
Ate cauliflower and rhubarb raw.
But best of all about him is
That "C" abounds in strawberries.

"D"

The doctors, I am glad to see,
Admit that there are none in tea ;
They worship, as I said before,
Three only ; but I know one more.

VITAMINS

For I have found a Vitamin
 In brandy, burgundy and gin ;
 And I salute with three times three
 The little chap I know as " D."



Vitamin " A "
Keeps the rickets away
And succours the meagre and nervy ;
" B " 's what you lack
If the tummy is slack,
And " C " is the foe of the scurvy ;
And so when you dines
Remember these lines,
And, if you'll be guided by me, Sir,
It don't matter what
Disease you have got,
Just order a bottle of " D ", Sir.

“HUSH, MRS. HUNDRED, HUSH!”

HUSH, Mrs. Hundred, hush—

If that's all you've got to say!

A hundred centenarians

In their gentle, courtly way

Have told us we're barbarians

And rotten with decay.

We have no heart, she has no hair,

They powder their noses everywhere,

Their skirts are short, we cannot court.

The younger generation

Have neither manners, pride nor grace,

There is no future for the race,

The modern girl is one long whirl,

And Heaven help the nation.

Well, there she goes, my modern dear—

Is there no grace, old lady, here?

So quick and neat, those feathered feet,

They walk the wind and not the street.

Old lady, did they walk so well

When you were young? I cannot tell.

I know you could not show such legs—

Such twinkling, silken, silver legs—

That flash a challenge far away

(And mark you, Madam, in your day,

When Julia's legs might not be shown,

Her fortune was her face alone;

30 "HUSH, MRS. HUNDRED, HUSH!"

But now the plainest Jane you know
May be a beauty down below):

So hush, Mrs. Hundred, hush!

Did you have legs as pretty?

And if you did, and kept them hid,

Why, Madam, what a pity!

But look again!

She is not plain.

"Ridiculous hat!" you said!

Well, that may be,

Still, one can see

The shape of that proud head.

The eyes, observe, are not cast down

As if she feared to face the town;

More human, Ma'am, and more divine,

Her honest eyes encounter mine,

Which, Madam, is what I prefer,

And if you don't, I think you err,

So hush, Mrs. Hundred, hush!

And then she's slim,

So swift and slim,

Electric wires in every limb!

And she can ride and she can swim,

And she can dance till the stars grow dim,

And, waking fresh as violets,

Play eighteen holes or seven sets,

Or paint, or cook,

Or write a book,

Or fence, or vote,

Or sail a boat,



Will run a mile or run a man
 (And run the office if she can),
 Defend a burglar, drive a 'plane,
 And in the evening dance again;
 So hush, Mrs. Hundred, hush!
 Control yourself and ponder:
 Should you have thrown that spiteful stone
 At my young lady yonder?

You did not show your ankles, no,
 And maybe that was wise,
 For sitting about had puffed them out
 To such an awkward size.
 You could not ride, you could not swim,
 You could not dance till the stars grew dim,
 And, waking fresh as violets,
 Play eighteen holes or seven sets,
 You could not run, you could not row,
 You could do nothing much but sew,
 You'd scarcely crawl across the hall
 Unless you were supported,
 You fled the house at the sight of a mouse
 And swooned when you were courted.
 And, Madam, have you always been
 So rare a judge of clothing?
 Have you forgot the painful scene
 When you put on your crinoline,
 Your fashionable crinoline?
 Like some balloon of bombazine
 You floated round the croquet-ground,
 While Granny watched with loathing.

"Ridiculous dress!" I think she cried,
"Far, far too long and much too wide!
When I was that young woman's age
We wore a frock and not a cage,
The girl's a perfect *sight*!
That crazy skirt collects the dirt!"
And, Madam, she was right.

You don't know what we're coming to—
No more did she.
There are not many, Ma'am, who do,
But, as you see,
At present we're an inch or two
Below the knee;
And I confess I like it so—
Look, Ma'am, again. And then, you know,
Skirts always will be wrong,
Too short or else too long;
Yet England's going strong,
Take it from me.

Hush, Mrs. Hundred, hush!
You are a dear,
But hush, Mrs. Hundred, hush!
I will not hear.
Hush, Mrs. Hundred, hush!
Your song is sung;
But not so long ago
You were the Modern Young.

FOUR NEGRO COMMERCIALS

I. DERE AIN'T NO WIMMIN . . .

*DERE ain't no wimmin in Hebb'n,
Dere ain't no wimmin in Hebb'n,
An' dis nigger ain't a-goin' to Hebb'n,
'Cos I'm fixed on meetin' my Mammy.*

Yo' Mammy nussed you from a little child,
Jem Johnson,
An' you saw Hebb'n when yo' Mammy smiled,
Jem Johnson,

*But dere ain't no wimmin in Hebb'n.
No, dere ain't no wimmin in Hebb'n, etc.*

I hear de good ole preacher say,
Jem Johnson,
You buy no mo' shoes for Martha Gray,
Jem Johnson,
'Cos dere ain't no wimmin in Hebb'n.
*Oh, dere ain't no wimmin in Hebb'n,
An' dis nigger ain't a-goin' to Hebb'n,
'Cos I'm fixed on meetin' my Mammy.*

2. PLAY ON YO' HARP

It's no use niggers t'inkin' dey's white—
Play on yo' harp, Ole Nigger!
It's no use takin' dem powders at night—
Play on yo' harp, Ole Nigger.

Put dem fancy petticoats down,
You got a harp an' I got a crown,
An', Lord, who'll care if youse black or brown,
Playin' on yo' harp, Ole Nigger?

You'll never be President of de United States—
Play on yo' harp, Ole Nigger!

But you'll come first at de Golden Gates—
Play on yo' harp, Ole Nigger!

Hey, gal, don't you powder yo' face!
What d'you want wid ribbons and lace?
You'll look fine in de angels' place
Playin' on yo' harp, Ole Nigger!

3. DAT BUTTERFLY

*Don't strike dat butterfly, Nigger,
He's got wings, like you.
Dat butterfly
Am goin' to die,
Same as you an' same as I;
But you and I
Am goin' to fly
Same as dat dam butterfly;
So don't strike dat butterfly, Nigger,
He's got wings, like you.*

All togeder in de upper air,
You an' me an' de Great Black Bear,
All good chillun will be flyin' up dere—
*Don't strike dat butterfly, Nigger,
He's got wings, like you, etc.*

FOUR NEGRO COMMERCIALS

An' it don't matter how you try,
Hidin' in de corners all around de sky,
You'm sure to meet dat butterfly.

*Don't strike dat butterfly, Nigger,
He's got wings like you, etc.*

Dat butterfly den he up and say,
"Hey, you done strike me, one fine day!"
An' Peter, he take yo' harp away.

*So don't strike dat butterfly, Nigger,
He's got wings like you-oo, etc.*

4. STOWAWAY

Stowaway! Stowaway!

I see you hidin';

Stowaway! Stowaway!

Come out of yo' corner.

Stowaway! Stowaway!

I'se rowin' dis boat,

I'se rowin' dis boat,

I'se rowin' dis boat,

An' you can't go over Jordan,

You can't cross over Jordan today,

Stowaway!

THE POWDER MONKEYS

WHENEVER we can
 We powder the nose ;
What worries a man
 Like a luminous nose ?
In sickness or health,
In woe or in wealth,
But never by stealth,
 We powder the nose.



The brush and the comb,
 The care of the nose,
Were kept for the home,
 We used to suppose ;
But now there's no place
Where it's a disgrace
To attend to the face
 As soon as it glows.

THE POWDER MONKEYS

He loses control,
We powder the nose ;
 He pours out his soul,
We powder the nose ;
 To boredom or bliss
 Our answer is this ;
 A curse—or a kiss ?—
We powder the nose.



Our lovers depart,
We powder the nose ;
 They shatter the heart,
We powder the nose ;
 The enemy's nigh,
 We melt and we cry,
 But our powder is dry
And we see to the nose.

What use is the dress,
The hat or the hose,
 If there's an excess
Of shine on the nose ?

Godiva could dare
To go about bare;
The girl didn't *care*—
She'd powdered the nose.



We'll stand in the dock
And powder the nose,
And if to the block
We finally goes
The procession will lag
While we open the bag,
Extract the last fag,
And powder the nose.

A SONG OF THE NORTH

THEY'VE stopped the band from playing in the Park

On a Sunday ;

They close the Public Gardens after dark

On a Sunday ;

This town's a tomb and no mistake ;

The Borough Council wins the cake ;

It seems a sin to be awake

On a Sunday.

Nowhere to go,

Nowt to be done,

Mustn't hear music,

Mustn't have fun ;

The pictures are shut and we haven't no club,

The only thing open this evening's the pub.

And, oh, my ! we're ready to cry

As we walk up and down

This nice pious town,

On a dreary, drizzly,

Granny's own grisly,

Muddy, municipal Sunday.

It's difficult to court a girl, you see,

On a Sunday,

If her dear mother hides the parlour-key

On a Sunday.

Well, it's not easy to be sweet
When a couple's only chance to meet
Is in a shower, in the street,
 On a Sunday.

*Nowhere to go,
 Nowhere to kiss,
 Mustn't do that,
 And mustn't do this.*
*But there's the Museum, and there without fail
We hug in a corner behind a stuffed whale ;
But, oh, my ! the keepers do pry,
And often I wish
There was some bigger fish
On a dreary, drizzly,
Granny's own grisly,
Mouldy, municipal Sunday.*

They've stopped the band from playing in the Park
 On a Sunday,
For Mendelssohn seemed too much like a lark
 On a Sunday ;
They've stopped the music in the Park,
They chase the couples after dark,
But dogs is still allowed to bark
 On a Sunday.

*Nowhere to sit,
 Walk up and down,
 Mustn't hear music
 In this pious town.*

A SONG OF THE NORTH

*The Mayor thinks Handel is bad for my soul,
But he's playing golf—at the nineteenth hole;
And, oh, my! I'm ready to cry :
I've blistered my feet
Walking the street
On a dreary, drizzly,
Granny's own grisly,
Moral, municipal Sunday.*

SONG FOR THE PARENTS OF YOUNG
THINGS INTENT ON MARRYING
THE WRONG PEOPLE

You young things who hurry to wed are a worry,
You make me exceedingly wild;
We all want our ration of flowery passion,
But that isn't marriage, my child.
I don't want to hear about Eros's dart;
You're not in a grand operatical part;
And when you refer to the gentleman's heart,
I ask myself, "What are his hobbies?"
 "What's his hobby, dear?"
 My father used to say.
 Is it bigamy or beer?
 Could you stand him all the day?
 Kisses, I allow,
 Are the main thing now,
 But marriage isn't one protracted Maytime.
 Love's all right
 By artificial light,
 But none of you seem to think about the daytime.

It isn't enough to be rather hot stuff
By the light of the silvery moon;
Any fool can excite on a Saturday night,
But what about Monday at noon?

With lip close to lip any girl can impress,
But to see eye to eye is the test of success
When she wants to Charleston and you to play
Chess,
Just ask yourself, "What are her hobbies?"



"What's her hobby, please?"

My father used to say.

Is her bonnet full of bees?

Could you stand her all the day?

How will you feel

At the morning meal?

*Marriage isn't one protracted Maytime.
Love's all right
By artificial light,
But none of you seem to think about the daytime.*

It's not the remark which is made in the dark,
But the things which are hissed at the table.
Well, what has been said about reading in bed?
And do you suppose you'll be able?
Her eyes may be angel's—but what of her skull?
He may be a devil—but will he be *dull*?
Well, how would you stand a wet Sunday at Hull?
I want to know, "What are his hobbies?"
 "What's his hobby, dear?"
 My father used to say.
 Is it bigamy or beer?
 Could you stand him all the day?
 Kisses, I allow,
 Are the main thing now,
But marriage isn't one protracted Maytime.
 Love's all right
 By artificial light,
But none of you seem to think about the daytime.

FOREIGN POLICY ; OR, THE UNIVERSAL AUNT

I'M tired of Lithuania,
I weary of the Lett,
I never had no mania
For Pole or Prussian yet ;
Old England is an island,
And this is my complaint,
Why does Old England mess about
With continents which ain't ?

*Poor old Britannier, the Universal Aunt !
Think that you can mother everybody ? Well, you can't.
What d'you want with Europe ? Why d'you wish to
roam ?
Ain't you got enough misfortunes in the home ?*

The foreigner's an alien,
He does not rule the waves ;
Give me the good Australian
Who cleans his teeth and shaves.
Oh, let the hairy Magyar
Stew in his horrid juice,
And scrap the Foreign Office,
For it ain't no kind of use !

*Poor old Britannier ! Talk about disarm ?
It's these here diplomatists that do the greatest harm.
Scrap the Foreign Office ! Why d'you want to roam ?
Ain't you got enough misfortunes in the home ?*

The paper's all Croatians
And Jugo-Slavs and Czechs,
In all these bearded nations
We're buried to the necks ;
But it takes a flood or earthquake
Or other nasty mess
To get the British Empire
Into the British Press !

*Poor old Britannier ! Excuse a little sob ;
Ain't your far-flung Empire a whole-time job ?
Less of this Locarny-blarney ! Why d'you want to
roam ?
Ain't you got enough misfortunes in the home ?*

THE DREADFUL BALLAD OF A TALKIE- RUINED HOME

A MOTHER stood in tears amid the ruins of her home
Beseeching of her menfolk dear that evening not to
 roam ;
Her first-born rose and struck her, but as he reached
 the door
The woman on her bended knees her husband did
 implore—

*“ Don’t take my boy to the Talkies !
 It’s puttin’ ideas in ’is ’ead,
 ’E makes the most ’orrible faces,
 And sleeps with a gun in ’is bed.
’E uses outlandish American words,
It’s nothin’ but “ bootleggers,” “ babies,” and “ birds,”
’E says I’ve an English accent
 An’ it’s not that I mind the snub,
But I want my boy to be British,
 So take ’im with you to the pub ! ”*

Out passed the men together to the gilded pleasure-
 hall
To feast their eyes on “ Passion Buds ”—or “ Love
 Excuses All.”
And crooks and crimes and cabarets, and girls in
 dishabille,
While on the lonely kitchen-floor the mother mur-
 mured still—

*"Don't take my boy to the Talkies!
 It's them that has poisoned the lad.
 Don't let 'im talk through 'is nose, dear,
 I'd sooner 'e went to the bad.
 Don't let 'im talk like the Talkies, you see,
 Why can't 'e speak the King's English, like me?
 'E tells me I ain't got no sex-urge,
 And it's not that I mind the snub,
 But I want my boy to be pu-ure,
 So take 'im with you to the pub!"*



The show was done, the boy said "Dad, I gotter kill
 ternight!
 I feel the blood-lust in my bones." His father said
 "That's right."
 They robbed a passing postman then, and, home
 again once more,
 They murdered that poor woman but she whispered
 through her gore—

50 BALLAD OF A TALKIE-RUINED HOME

*"Don't take my boy to the Talkies!
I told you it done 'im no good.
Now we'll be all in the papers,
And all through that there 'Ollywood.
Tell the kind judge that the boy ain't to blame,
Ever since "Broadway" 'e's not been the same.
'E told me I'm Nobody's Baby,
And it's not that I mind the snub,
But I want my boy to be British,
So take 'im with you to the pub!"*

NEWS: A BALLAD FOR BREAKFAST- TIME

THERE'S not very much in the paper,
But what's in the paper is bad,
A peeress has married a draper,
An aeroplane's crashed at Bagdad.
A girl has been cruelly battered,
She was battered to death with a bat,
The authorities say that it points to foul play,
And what do you think of that ?

*News ! News ! It gives you the blues,
Slaughters of daughters and all the clues !
Why do we peruse the discouraging news
On a mouldy Monday morning ?*

There's been a big fire in Australia,
And a small revolution in Spain ;
They're growing a new kind of dahlia ;
The Government's blundered again.
A woman has flown the Atlantic
And explained to the Press in a chat
That she'd not the remotest idea she'd be noticed—
And what do you think of that ?

*News ! News ! Neurotical news !
Publicity Cissy she gives me the blues ;
But I can't refuse a nice bit of news
On a mouldy Monday morning.*

Our trade is deplorably groggy,
A bad epidemic is near,
The forecast is "Freezing and Foggy,"
They think you get cancer from beer.
A lady who's nearly a hundred
Sees ladies she's horrified at,
And she wouldn't wonder if England went under—
And that, says the lady, is that.

*News! News! Nonsensical news!
Fashions and passions you can't excuse,
But I wouldn't lose my bit of bad news
On a mouldy Monday morning.*

Unless I am greatly mistaken
We've all of us plenty to do;
Why must we absorb with our bacon
The woes of the Universe too?
For breakfast the crisis at Koosh-Koosh,
For lunch the disaster at Kat,
Some other man's winner at tea, and at dinner
A murder or two. And that's that.

*News! News! It gives you the blues,
Sinners and winners and why they lose;
But everyone chews his bit of bad news
On a mouldy Monday morning.*

And often I think of transferring
To some less excitable zone
Where not very much is occurring,
And that is not publicly known;

Where flights are conducted in secret,
And people would not care a drat
If a typist went frantic and *swam* the Atlantic—
And that, since you ask me, is that.

*News! News! Oh for a snooze!
Slaughters of daughters and all the clues,
Dramas, pyjamas and drugs and booze,
Arsons and parsons and all their views,
Smashes and crashes that don't amuse!
News! News! I'd like to vamoose
Anywhere, anywhere out of the news,
But meanwhile I glue my nose to the news
Every mouldy morning.*

MR. BAEDEKER: OR, BRITONS ABROAD

In duty bound
We've tottered round
From gallery to gallery ;
And seeing sights
We think by rights
Deserves a handsome salary.
Our necks are stiff from staring up at ornamental
roofs,
We've masterpieces on the brain and blisters on the
hoofs,
We've peered at bits of tapestry and pottery and
wood,
And looked them up in catalogues to see if they
were good ;
For Kings and Governments may err,
But never Mr. Baedeker.
And by degrees we mean to look
At everything that's in his book ;
What he admired
We mean to see,
But we're very, very tired,
And we want a cup of tea.
Oh, Mr. Baedeker ! We've reached page four,
And Oh, Mr. Baedeker, we can't do any more.
Say what you will, Sir, the finest sight
Is our rock-garden on a moonlit night.

It's hard to say
Why in this way
We occupy our little ease ;
We don't much care
For porcelain ware
Or sculpture by Praxiteles :
But we are not here for pleasure, and a man must
keep in touch
With works of art by foreigners which bore him
very much,



With ivories and vases and Napoleonic beds,
With heads which have no bodies and with busts
which haven't heads ;
We've conscientiously tabooed
All statuary in the nude,
But shown a proper interest
In figures adequately dressed :

What he admired
We mean to see,
But we're very, very tired,
And we want a cup of tea.
Oh, Mr. Baedeker! We've done this town,
And Oh, Mr. Baedeker, we must sit down.
Say what you will, Sir, the finest sight
Is our rock-garden on a moonlit night.

PHILOSOPHY

How are you, Milly ? As for me,
Oh, well, we mustn't grumble ;
Things isn't what they used to be,
But there, we mustn't grumble ;
Poor Albert's out of work again,
My Lizzie's got her favourite pain,
And don't it make you sick, this rain ?
But there, we mustn't grumble.

*It's no use hollering until you're burning,
It's an ill wind that don't blow no one good,
It's a long lane that hasn't any turning ;
I've got my health and spirits—touching wood.*
We oughter won a thousand pounds from that there
Guessing Game,
*I guessed the horses right enough and Albert sent the claim,
And now it seems he's been and gone and never signed
his name !*
But there, we mustn't grumble,

The landlord's playing up a treat,
But there, we mustn't grumble.
Well, says he'll turn us on the street ;
But there, we mustn't grumble ;
Of course, what I'd put by is spent,
And all I've got to pay the rent
Is twopence—one of which is bent,
But there, we mustn't grumble.



*I never hold with worrying and whining,
Well, what I say is what must be must be,
And every cloud has got a silver lining,
Though now and then it's very hard to see.
These little things are only sent to try us, don't they say?
Poor Albert's been to Epsom backing winners all the
day,
And every time his horse came in, his bookie went away—
But there, we mustn't grumble.*

*So Maud's expecting? Is that so?
Oh, well, we mustn't grumble.
Six is a lot—I ought to know—
But there, we mustn't grumble.
There's one or two with eight or nine,
There's some as sits and sips their wine
And wish they'd had a few of mine—
So there, we mustn't grumble.*

*It might be snowing if it wasn't raining;
We've plenty to be thankful for, I mean.
When Albert starts his cursing and complaining
I always say "Well, look what might have been!"
They're taking all my teeth out, but the dentist's very
kind,
Well, what I say, we might have all been deaf and dumb
and blind,
And we've never had the house on fire, that I can call to
mind,
So there, we mustn't grumble.*

MUMPS

(A MERRY CHRISTMAS SONG)

My wife, poor thing, has got the mumps,
Her neck is just a lot of lumps.
Her Christmas she will spend in bed,
Consuming gruel, milk and bread ;
 And it is cruel
 To play with gruel
When turkeys are the trumps ;
 I say it's crule
 To spend one's Yule
In quarantine for Mumps.

My wife has gone and got the mumps,
The family is in the dumps ;
It would enrage a plaster saint
To get this infantile complaint
 At Christmas-time
 When birds are prime
And off go all our humps ;
 I say it's hard
 To be debarred
From merriment by mumps.

What is the use of doctors who
Know all the things that doctors do,
Can draw a complicated plan
Of what goes on inside a man

And tell what's best
For someone's chest
With three well-chosen thumps,
But in a case
Of swollen face
Can only say "It's mumps"?

Has Science with impartial pride
Mapped out the stars and my inside,
Yet cannot obviate or check
A silly swelling in the neck?
Why such conceit
In Harley Street?
What are their stomach-pumps,
Their diets, dopes
And stethoscopes?
They cannot stop the mumps!

But we will garlands to her bring,
Hang holly round the bed and sing
"Oh, may the man who gave her mumps
Be wed to five successive frumps!
Oh, may his stocks
Take nasty knocks
In all the Wall Street slumps!"
For it is crule
To spend one's Yule
In quarantine for mumps.

LET'S STOP SOMEBODY FROM DOING SOMETHING !

COUNCILLOR BUSY and Mr. Nose, the Member for
Misery Wood,
And the Secretaree for the Societee for Making the
Public Good,
Were walking up and down the town with a frown,
for everywhere they saw
The bold, bad Britisher doing things which weren't
against the law ;
And " This won't do ! " said Councillor Busy ;
" This won't do ! " said the Honourable Nose ;
" It certainly won't ! " said the Secretaree of the
S.M.B.P.G.

" Let's stop somebody from doing something !

Everybody does too much.

*People seem to think they've a right to eat and drink,
Talk and walk and respirate and rink,
Bicycle and bathe and such.*

*So let's have lots of little regulations,
Let's make laws and jobs for our relations,
There's too much kissing at the railway stations—
Let's find out what everyone is doing,
And then stop everyone from doing it."*

Councillor Busy and Mr. Nose walked on through
the summer night,
And a young man looked at his lady friend and
suddenly smiled outright ;



And he hadn't applied for a licence, or been to the
County Hall,

Or made a report at the magistrate's court, or filled
up a form at all;

And "Did you see that?" said Councillor Busy;

"Did you see *that*?" said the Honourable Nose;

"I *did* see that," said the Secretaree of the
S.M.B.P.G.

"Let's stop somebody from doing something!

There's too much smiling in the city.

You don't see me in conversation with a she;

We don't osculate, and why should he?

Send for the Watch Committee!

Let's make the girls wear high-necked blouses,

Let's put microphones in people's houses,

Let's imprison gentlemen who hug their spouses;

Let's find out what everyone is doing,

And then stop everyone from doing it."

Councillor Busy went up to Heaven (from eating too
much fruit),

And the Secretaree took an overdose of tea, and
Nose soon followed suit;

But they didn't much like the tone of Heaven, for
the tone was far too gay.

The angels seemed to enjoy themselves, and the
young folk laughed all day.

And "This won't do," said Councillor Busy;

"Did you see *that*?" said the Honourable Nose;

"No self-control!" said the Secretaree of the
S.M.B.P.G.

*“ Let’s stop somebody from doing something !
There’s too much liberty here,
Constant song is obviously wrong,
Let’s get a plainclothes constable along—
Somebody should interfere.
Let’s stop love and lollipops and smoking,
Let’s stamp out unregulated joking,
We’ve got noses and they’re made for poking,
Let’s find out what everyone is doing,
And then stop everyone from doing it.”*

VERSES FOR EVERY DAY

BREAKFAST

GIVE me a little ham and egg
And let me be alone, I beg.
Give me my tea, hot, sweet and weak;
Bring me *The Times* and do not speak.
Let it at once be understood
My night was very far from good;
I say, I did not sleep a wink
Till half-past five or six, I think,
And then, of course—another cup?—
The birds began and woke me up;
At any rate, till after ten
I shall not love my fellow-men.
Till then it will be much the best
If no one here attempts to jest;
And do not let my lusty young
In my vicinity give tongue.
If Baby has to throw his ball,
Then let him throw it in the hall.
Let none with hearty tones enthuse,
But let me wallow in the news—
Distress, divorces, fire and flood,
Foul murder, bigamy and blood—
Such grim events befit the meal,
For that's exactly how I feel.
Address me softly after ten,
I shall be conscious, dear, by then;

But now my tea, hot, sweet and weak—
Give me *The Times* and do not speak.

TO A WRONG NUMBER

No, Sir, I am not Mr. Dark,
Nor am I Kensington, but Park :
My number, too, is quite unique,
And most unlike the one you seek.
Yes, yes, it hurts you, I can see,
And frankly, it's a blow to me ;
For I was shaving when you rang,
And down three flights of stairs I sprang.
(You will not take offence, I hope,
If what I say is largely soap ?
I'm out of breath, and I must own
There's soap upon the telephone.)
Where was I ? Well, the saddest thing—
I was expecting Jean to ring,
And when I heard the thrilling bell
I cut myself—I flew—I fell.
I take it you did not rejoice
To hear my cultivated voice ;
Imagine, then, how one deplores
In such a case the sound of yours.
But there it is, and here we are,
So near, old fellow, yet so far.
Fate, that incorrigible wag,
Has dipped her fingers in the bag,
And, careless what the end may be—
Hullo ?—connected you and me,
Two voices crying in the night,
Two dogs that bark but cannot bite.

Hullo? But must this be the end?
Tell me about yourself, my friend.
Who are you? How—and what—d'you do?
And are you Kensington or Kew?
Did you, as I did, hope to hear
The melting tones of someone dear?
What is her name? And are you there?
And is she kind as she is fair?
Did she accept you or refuse?
Is she your lovely wife—or whose?
Or was it not a girl at all,
But some degrading business-call?
Your voice is hot with high affairs—
Don't tell me you are selling shares.
Ah, Sir, give up the chase for gold;
It's disappointing, so I'm told;
However spacious the amounts,
Love is the only thing that counts.
Ring off? Ring off? I can't think why.
However, if you must—Goodbye.
A pity. But I shan't complain;
They're sure to put you through again.

COURTEOUS REPLY TO A MONEYLENDER'S
CIRCULAR

LARGE-HEARTED Sir, I will allow
I *am* in need of money now;
But how have you the face to quote
The paltry figures in your note?
You do not seem to be aware
You have addressed a millionaire.

What is this talk of fifties, fool?
I think in thousands as a rule:
The present business I am at
Involves a larger sum than that.
You ask for no (I understand)
Security but note-of-hand,
While there should be, from what you say,
Almost no interest to pay:
And, if I read your offer right,
I'd like a million by tonight.

TO THE HEAD-WAITER AT THE —

I LIKE the bow with which you wish
For my approval of the fish,
The lovely bird, so richly browned,
Which little sausages surround,
And dainty curls of bacon quite
Enough to make an appetite.
I love the proud but anxious smirk
That seems to say "An artist's work";
I love to note your lighter mood
When I consent to eat the food;
But I have often wondered what
Would happen, friend, if I did not.
Let us experiment today—
Pray take the nasty bird away!
I never met such dreadful meat—
My hat, it is not fit to eat!

TO A JUNIOR WAITER

I KNOW I look the kind of dolt
Who never would or could revolt,
A martyr who prefers to wait
For food to blossom on his plate.
It's true I hate to make a scene,
Especially in front of Jean;
But, waiter, when I am upset
I am the fiercest fellow yet;
Quite suddenly I tear my hair
And leave the building then and there,
Employing rude expressions such
As would enrage you very much;
And from that moment I go on
And on about the Restaurant.
It's true I hate to make a scene,
Especially in front of Jean,
But there'll be one this afternoon,
If something doesn't happen soon.

AT THE THEATRE

To the Lady Behind Me

DEAR Madam, you have seen this play;
I never saw it till today.
You know the details of the plot,
But, let me tell you, I do not.
The author seeks to keep from me
The murderer's identity,
And you are not a friend of his
If you keep shouting who it is.

The actors in their funny way
 Have several funny things to say,
 But they do not amuse me more
 If you have said them just before ;
 The merit of the drama lies,
 I understand, in some surprise ;
 But the surprise must now be small
 Since you have just foretold it all.
 The lady you have brought with you
 Is, I infer, a half-wit too,
 But I can understand the piece
 Without assistance from your niece.
 In short, foul woman, it would suit
 Me just as well if you were mute ;
 In fact, to make my meaning plain,
 I trust you will not speak again.
 And—may I add one human touch?—
 Don't breathe upon my neck so much.

To a Late-comer

I KNOW—I know how penitent you are ;
 You have had trouble with your awful car.
 No fault of yours, but Circumstance and Fate,
 Malign conspirators, have made you late.
 You went and dressed in ample time, I know ;
 Your wife, of course, your watch as well, was slow ;
 You left the tickets on the mantel-shelf,
 And the self-starter could not start itself ;
 As for the traffic, this was hard to beat,
 You took an hour from Sloane to Regent Street.
 Your dinner seemed a simple one, but still
 It took an age—they would not bring the bill ;

And then the women vanished, I suppose,
And spent ten minutes powdering the nose.
Then round Soho you drove, round Leicester Square
Policemen yelling "You must not park there!"
Anchored at last at Kew or Chorley Wood
And trotted here as quickly as you could.
And now, poor chap, you crawl from knee to knee;
It hurts you just as much as it hurts me,
I know—I know—I know—I *know*—I KNOW!
But would you much mind getting off my toe?



THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES

I DO not lie awake till morn,
 As these professors do,
 And wonder whether Man was born
 At Eden or the Zoo.

Did Man begin like you and me
 Or climbing round the family tree,
 A Gugnunc or a Chimpanzee?

Well, I confess I'm neutral.

*I don't seem to care
 What my ancestors were—
 It don't seem to matter to me.
 Perhaps they had tails,
 And perhaps they were snails,
 Or something washed up by the sea ;*

*Perhaps the professors are right when they claim
That Man is a monkey grown more or less tame,
But whatever they settle my rent is the same,
So it don't seem to matter to me.*

The learned men grow more and more
Excitable and wan,
Enquiring what the world is for,
And how it all goes on.
Is Life a little or a lot?
Is Space a substance or a spot?
Am I an accident; or what?
Well, I confess I'm neutral.

*I don't seem to care
What my origins were—
Well, it don't seem to matter to me.
The reason we're here
Isn't perfectly clear,
But we're here for some time, I can see.
And Science in many things may be behind—
The improvement of beer is the one in my mind;
But did the poor monkey descend from Mankind?
Well, it don't seem to matter to me.*

I get no kick, I know not why,
When men explain to me
There may be worlds beyond the sky
Which I shall never see.
Six hundred million miles away
There may be life, or not, they say;
It may be gravel soil, or clay;
And I confess I'm neutral.

*Are there people in Mars?
Have they oysters and bars?
Well, it don't seem to matter to me.
For better, for worse,
I've took this Universe,
And the others can frizzle, for me.
I eat a good dinner, I earn a good pay,
I've a bob on a greyhound, I've chickens that lay,
And I'm taking my Jane to the pictures today,
So it don't seem to matter to me.*

WHAT IS LOVE?

“WHAT is Love?” the poets question,
And their answers don't impress ;
But if they have no suggestion
You and I can give a guess.
What is Love, that makes us gay
In this idiotic way?
Well, I'll whisper if I may—
What is Love?
A perfect nuisance.

What is Love? It's Nature's blunder.
What is Love? A waste of time.
What is Love? A nine days' wonder.
What is Love? The cause of crime.
What is Lo-o-o-o-ove?
What is Lo-o-o-o-ove?
What is Love? A perfect nuisance—
But I love you.

What is Love, that, swift or slowly,
Brings all mortals to their knees?
Is it horrid? Is it holy?
Is it some obscure disease?
What is Love, that, Jew or Turk,
Lord or lackey, makes us shirk
Duty, Family and Work?
What is Love?
A public nuisance.

What is Love? A kind of measles.

What is Love? The end of sense.

What is Love? The cause of weasels.

What is Love? A great expense.

What is Lo-o-o-o-ove?

What is Lo-o-o-o-ove?

What is Love? A certain loser—

But I love you.

What is Love, that, with no warning,

Makes a fairy of a fright,

Takes a man that's sane this morning

And he's mad tomorrow night?

What is Love, that saps our forces,

Makes us drink and bet on horses,

Ends in murders, debts, divorces?

What is Love?

A general nuisance.

What is Love? Creation's error.

What is Love? A source of crime.

What is Love? The sailor's terror.

What is Love? A waste of time.

What is Lo-o-o-o-ove?

What is Lo-o-o-o-ove?

What is Love? Well, that's what Love is—

But I love you.

I'VE GOT THE GIGGLES TODAY

A NICE young man about the town
Was long in love with Mary Brown,
And one fine day proposed to crown
 His lengthy adoration ;
But as he fell upon his knee
Exceedingly surprised was he
To hear her shout with girlish glee
 This chilling observation—

*" I've got the giggles today !
 Everything's making me laugh ;
Once in a while I like a good smile—
 Today I'm too tickled by half.
Don't think it's anything personal, please,
But really you do look a fool on your knees !
 I see it was rude of me now,
 But I suddenly thought of a cow,
 Well, a rather nice calf—
 Oh, don't make me laugh,
For I've got the giggles today !"*

Sweet Mary took her favourite car
And drove it very fast and far ;
Wherever dangerous corners are
 The little monster snorted ;
A constable his hand inclined,
But Mary bumped him from behind,
And when he mildly spoke his mind
 She laughingly retorted—



"I've got the giggles today !

Surely you understand that ?

Doesn't life seem to be rather a scream ?

How can you stand there in that hat ?

I noticed your signal and thought I should burst—

You were just like the statue of Edward the First !

You can't think how funny you look !

The moment I saw you I shook.

Don't be a Dean,

You know what I mean—

I have got the giggles today !"

Poor Mary! As the years flew past
Her mirth grew more ill-timed and vast,
But Albert stuck it, and at last

He led her to the altar :

And when the parson murmured low
The words which all young women know
She quivered like a jelly-o
And smilingly did falter—

"I've got the giggles today !

It's really too funny to miss

Mother in tears ! And how many years

Has Mother been living for this ?

I've only just noticed that Albert is fat,

And why do the clergy wear collars like that ?

Oh, hold me or else I shall fall—

I'll never be married at all !

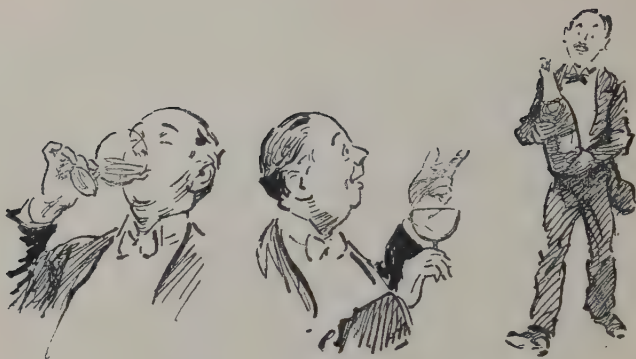
'Obey,' did you say ?

Please take me away

For I've got the giggles today !"

Poor Mary's married life was short,
 A rumpus of a painful sort,
 And then they questioned in the Court
 Her matrimonial fitness ;
 But when the lawyer sought to pry
 Exactly what she'd done and why
 This most unsuitable reply
 Was uttered by the witness—

*“I've got the giggles today !
 And you're such a master of chaff ;
 I cannot recall what happened at all
 Because you keep making me laugh.
 Well, why do you wear those ridiculous bibs ?
 I'm going home now, for it's hurting my ribs.
 Of course, you were born at the Bar,
 You don't know how funny you are !
 Some other time
 We'll chat about crime,
 But I've got the giggles today !”*



IS THAT CHAMPAGNE ?

Is that champagne ?

Then put it down the drain !

It's a taste that I'm unable to explain.

*It picks you up, I know, but then it knocks you down
again ;*

*I'd rather have some arrowroot, I'd rather have some rain ;
Pour me out a crème de menthe, or something from
the main.*

Is that champagne ?

Then you can put it down the drain.

Unnatural compound, which, like some morass,
All day expels carbonic acid gas,
Fit but for weddings (and disgusting then)—
Take it away ! This is no drink for men.

Is that champagne ?

Then put it down the drain !

I never want to touch the stuff again.

*Load me up with liquids of almost any sort—
Lemonade or liquorice or peppermint or port,
A nice light lager or a sherry if you're short,
But, if that's champagne,
Better put it down the drain.*

Vile effervescence, bubbly though you be,
Mere aëration has no charms for me.
Still wines run deep ; give me a vintage red,
Which to the soul proceeds and not the head.

*Is that champagne ?
Then put it down the drain !
It's bogus and it's bilious, it's a bane.
Forty bob a bottle ! Well, it may amuse a peer ;
Some would take to water if the price of it was dear,
But who'd buy bubbly if it cost the same as beer ?
Still, if that's champagne
You can fill my glass again.*

THE MOSCOW MANNER

IN olden days, when someone wanted something of
another,
He spoke him fair and friendly as a Briton and a
brother ;
And persons who desired their troops to hurry to the
fray
Were careful to suggest it in a complimentary way,
Singing—

*Yeomen! True men! Sons of the free!
Heirs of the ages, lords of the sea!
Men of Devon, makers of the maps!
Splendid fellows, capital chaps,
There's the foe!
Away we go!
Good men, true men, follow me!*

But nowadays it's different. The demagogue is
proud
To explain to his supporters they're a miserable
crowd,
And it seems that to electrify the British worker's
blood
You address the man as dirt and you remind him he
is mud,

Singing—

*Wage-slaves! Yoke-fellows! Dolts and dupes!
Economic serfs and nincompoops!
Earth-worms, half-wits, capitalist pawns,
Jail-birds, jelly-fish, slum-scum, prawns,
Industrial cogs,
Poor fools and frogs,
Beggars and boobies—Vote for Me!*

Our fathers found it wiser to throw very little dirt
At the persons they were seeking at the moment to
convert,
But now, if people argue when you say that black is
white,
You must kick them in the stomach till they see that
you are right,

Singing—

*Parasites! Snobs! Shareholders! Rats!
Bosses! Bullies! Bloodsuckers! Bats!
Liberals, lap-dogs, black-legs, fools,
Company directors, capitalist tools,
Conservatives, stoats,
I want your votes—
Peers and parasites, Vote for Me!*

SPORT SONG FOR SENTIMENTALISTS

[“There are so many foxes dug out and killed in this country by poachers that we are only too pleased to get them out ourselves and save them from such an ignoble death.”—*From a M.F.H.’s letter.*

“If a fox goes to ground and you leave him the farmers set traps and he is caught and killed in a very much more painful way than dying fighting.”—*From another ditto.*]

It’s really remarkably pleasant
To wander about in a wood
And kill an occasional pheasant,
Provided the motive is good;
And one of the jolliest features
Of slaying superfluous game
Is the thought that you’re saving the creatures
From a death of dishonour and shame.

*Every bird has to die
By-and-by, by-and-by,
And they’re lucky to die as they do,
For if they do not
They are probably shot
By someone who’s not in “Who’s Who”;
And I give you my word
Any sensitive bird—
A point for our foolish reproachers—
Prefers his career
To be stopped by a peer
And not by unmannerly poachers.*

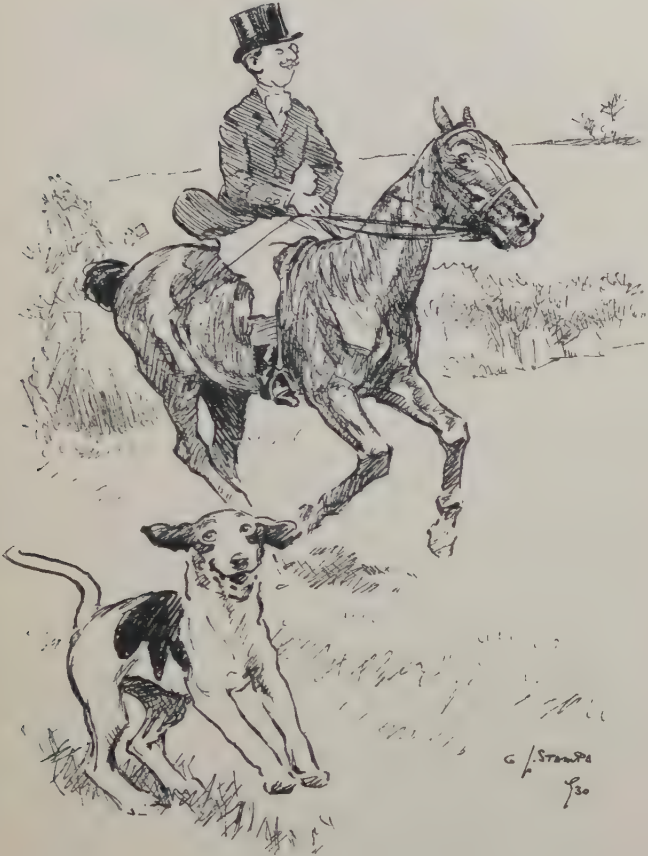


CHORUS

*It's all for the sake of the bird, poor thing !
 A point for the foolish reproacher !
 And oft, I have heard,
 On the face of the bird
 A smile of serene
 Satisfaction is seen—
 To think that it wasn't a poacher !*

Dumb creatures with me are a passion ;
 I've a special regard for the fox,
 And I seek in my fatherly fashion
 To spare him excitement and shocks ;
 The farmer is anxious to fill him
 With pellets, as farmers are wont,
 And it's really a kindness to kill him,
 For he's certain to die if we don't.

*Every fox has to die
 By-and-by, by-and-by,
 But what he can't bear is a gun ;
 So we hunt him with dogs
 Over meadows and bogs,
 For that is his notion of fun.
 And I vow and aver
 That foxes prefer
 To be killed, as it were, in their armour
 By an aristocrat
 In a shiny top-hat,
 And not by an under-bred farmer.*



G. J. Stamps
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CHORUS

*It's all for the sake of the fox, poor thing !
He does like to die in his armour ;
And oft on his face
At the end of the chase
A smile of serene
Satisfaction is seen—
To think that it wasn't a farmer !*

THE WHITE WINE ELECTION

["The one outstanding issue is the Eighteenth Amendment."
—*Daily Paper on the Presidential Election, 1928.*]

THERE's a wild time now in the United States,
In Alaska, Nebraska, Connecticut and Maine,
From Battery Point to the Golden Gates

There's a hundred million Americans in pain.

And what's it biting 'em?

What's exciting 'em?

Why do they make such lots of speeches?

Is it European Pacts,

Or the Immigration Acts,

The size of fleets or the price of peaches,

The Brotherhood of Man,

Or a new Peace Plan?

Why do the papers rave and riot

North and South of the Dixie Line?

Well, it's all about a difficult question of diet—

Ought the Americans to drink white wine?

'Cos Bert says "Oughtn't" and Al says "Oughter"—

And who'll be President of the United States?

Al wants wine and Bert whines "Water"—

And who'll be President of the United States?

Who'll be President, Al or Bert?

Al thinks a little glass of Hock won't hurt.

But Herbert has a shock

If he sees a glass of Hock,

*Graves or Chablis, Château Yquem,
 And other pretty liquids I will not name,
 For Bert don't like them and it seems a shame
 (There's a lot to be said for Herbert Hoover,
 But nobody could call him a gravity-remover).
 Anyhow, Hock
 Is the stumbling-block,
 Not ships or stock,
 Or the Monroe Doc.,
 And north and south of the Dixie Line
 They're all discussing how a man should dine—
 Well, ought Americans to drink white wine?*

Abraham Lincoln sits in the sky
 With good George Washington and one or two
 mates,
 And "Abe," says Washington, "I can't think why
 There's all this noise in the United States."
 And Abraham says
 "When I was Pres.,
 Nobody could say we'd no ideels,
 But we didn't much mind
 How Americans dined,
 And we *never* had elections all about meals."
 And George said, "Father told me it was rude
 To talk in company about one's food,
 And I never knew it mattered such a lot
 If Americans drank white wine or not."
 But Bert says "Oughtn't" and Al says "Oughter,"
 And who'll be President of the United States?

*Al wants wine and Bert whines "Water,"
And who'll be President of the United States?
Who'll be President, Bert or Al?
Bert thinks Rudesheimer's bad for Cal
(There's a lot to be said for Herbert Hoover,
But he's got a lot to learn as a gravity-remover).
And if Al takes a knock
Abandon hope of Hock,
For Herbert has a shock
If he sees a glass of Hock,
And Hock, just Hock,
Is the stumbling-block,
Not ships or stock,
Or the Monroe Doc.,
So who'll be President of the United States?
Michigan, Missouri, Mississippi, Maryland,
Colorado, Kansas, Kentucky, Carolina,
Vermont, Virginia, Tennessee and Texas,
Arizona, Utah, Oregon, Nevada,
Maine, Montana,
Iowa, Indiana,
And that's about all
That I recall,
But they're all discussing how a man should dine—
Well, ought Americans to drink white wine?*

PHARMACY WEEK

SONG-SLOGAN FOR A CHEMIST'S WINDOW

PAUSE, passer-by, and softly say,
Well, *am* I quite the thing today ?
The human race is far from strong,
And most of us have something wrong—
Take It In Time !

Are you as well as you suppose ?
There is a pimple on your nose ;
And many a spot that size, my friend,
Becomes an abscess in the end—
Take It In Time !

That little cough which you neglect
Will mean pneumonia, I expect ;
While Pyorrhœa lurks beneath
Four out of five of Britain's teeth—
Take It In Time !

There are complaints which, if ignored,
Attack at last the spinal cord ;
And woe betide the child who scorns
Our cure for Chilblains, Chaps or Corns—
Take It In Time !

You would not wish to see your wife
Dissected by the surgeon's knife ;
But that is what will happen if
She don't correct that tiresome sniff—

Take It In Time !



I knew a man whose horrid breath
Untimely drove him to his death ;
So I should gargle, Sir, with this
Extremely pleasant dentifrice—

Take It In Time !

PHARMACY WEEK

One moment, Madam ! Try your weight.
 Ah ! seven stone. You should be eight.
 But we've a tonic, Ma'am, which may
 Prevent your wasting quite away—

Take It In Time !

Then 'tis impossible to tell
 If the inside is working well ;
 You would be safer if you chewed
 These little tablets after food—

Take It In Time !

Gold is a curse, we all admit,
 But you have not too much of it ;
 Why waste it then on Doctor's bills ?
 You have the pains and we the pills—

Take Both In Time !

*For Nervousness, Lassitude, Debility, Anæmia,
 Quinsy, Sciatica, Diseases of the Skin,
 Rheumatism, Dandruff, Acute Septicæmia,
 The Colic and the Croup,
 The Shingles and the Stoop,
 Melancholy, Flatulence—walk right in !
 Don't shut the door when the horse is stolen,
 Don't sit and wonder why the gums are swollen,
 We have the one and only proved panacea
 For Sore Throat, Backache, Asthma, Pyorrhæa,
 We sell Face-creams, Shaving-brushes, Soap,
 Scents and Sponges, Hot-water Bottles, Hope,*

*We'll keep you thin,
Adiposity's a sin;
Or we'll keep you fat
If you fancy that.*

*Walk in ! Walk in ! One penny pill
Saves you a pound on the doctor's bill.
Something's wrong, though you don't look ill—
Take It In Time !*

TOO MUCH!

WELL, Mrs. Henn, and have you heard the latest?

Biggest bit of foolishness to date!

Seems a millionaire

With a lot of cash to spare

Has given fifty thousand to the State.

Just fancy, giving money to the Government!

Might as well have thrown it all away.

Fancy giving money to the Government

When you and me have got the rent to pay!

Nobody can tell what men will do—

Always breaking out with something new;

Nothing can surprise me—can it you?

But fancy giving money to the Government!

When you think of all the milds and bitters

Fifty thousand Bradburys would buy!

Think of all the fun

You and me could have with *one*—

Isn't it enough to make you cry?

Well, fancy giving money to the Government!

Might as well have put it down the drain

Fancy giving money to the Government!

Nobody will see the stuff again.

Well, they've no idea what money's for—

Ten to one they'll start another war.

I've heard a lot of silly things, but, Lor'!

Fancy giving money to the Government!



FAREWELL TO A LADY

(FOR MUSIC)

I'LL send thee no more roses, Eve,
Nor lilies gold and white,
But these with my true love receive,
And wear for me tonight.



So may they by thy touch be blessed,
And when we two must part,
I'll pluck one blossom from thy breast
And keep it next my heart.

For thou art still my dainty dove
And hast not any peer,
But I'll send no more roses, love,
Because they are too dear.

FAREWELL TO A LADY

And oh ! the daisy on the sward,
The primrose by the lea,
The simple blooms I can afford
Were never made for thee.

For thee the orchid paints his crest,
For thee the eagles fly ;
Thou wilt be clad in Nature's best,
Or know the reason why.

So I'll forget thee if I can,
And thou shalt have thy bliss,
For thou wilt find a dearer man,
And I a cheaper Miss.

I'll send thee no more roses, Eve,
Nor lilies gold and white,
But these with my true love receive,
And wear for me tonight.



FAREWELL TO ANOTHER LADY

(FOR JAZZ)

GOOD-BYE, my love, good-bye, good-bye,
But dry, oh dry, that lovely eye!

We must be brave,

So do behave—

The porter's staring so.

I'll be all right when you are gone,

I'll set my teeth and carry on.

My dear, don't think

I'll take to drink

Or suicide—oh no!

When you're away

Don't think I'm moping ;

Life will be grey,

But I'll keep hoping.

When you're away

I'll sigh and say,

" She's not the only pearl " ;

I'll cast my eye

About and try

To find another girl.

I do not think that you would say
 We are unique in any way ;
 Your eyes and feet
 Are very sweet,
 But so are millions more.
 I have my points, I know, but then
 There must be quite a lot of men
 No less refined
 And good and kind
 And easy to adore.

*When you're away
 You'd best forget me,
 And curse the day
 On which you met me.
 Don't lose your grip,
 That upper lip
 Keep rigid if you can ;
 Just cast your eye
 About and try
 To find another man.*

Ah, not again shall these lips touch—
 But does that matter very much ?
 It is a blow,
 But then, you know,
 Nobody cares but us ;
 The world will still go round and round,
 And twenty bob still make a pound ;
 My appetite
 Will be all right,
 So, darling, why the fuss ?

*When you're away,
Don't think I'm moping ;
With my dismay
I'll keep on coping.
Just look about
And I've no doubt
You'll land a landed Earl ;
I'll cast my eye
About and try
To find another girl.*

NOTHING'S BEEN THE SAME

THANK you, Mrs. Thomas, and I don't mind if I do ;
My dear, it seems an age since I was sitting here
with you.

I only hope you're better, dear, than what I am,
because—

Oh, well, we mustn't grumble, but I'm not the girl
I was.

*Nothing's been the same since I took up with orange-
juice,*

One always pays for foolishness, my dear—

Pains in the back and side,

My little bird has died,

And bilious—well, I couldn't tell you here !

*Then we had the Frost, my dear, and then we had
the Flood,*

*And Bert's been quite a martyr to suppression of
the blood.*

*Oranges ? I tell you, dear, with me their name is mud—
So what about a little drop of beer ?*

A tumbler night and morning ! Well, I'd just as
soon have ink ;

It's what you're bred and born to is the safest, don't
you think ?

And don't you let 'em talk you round with this
reducing stuff—

There used to be too much of me, and now there's
not enough.

Nothing's been the same since I took up with orange-juice ;

It never does to shock the system, dear :

My temper's kind of terse,

The weather's worse and worse,

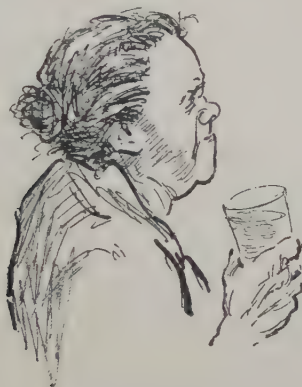
And the Government is acting very queer.

*Well, that's what comes of tampering with Providence,
you see ;*

It's oranges for animals, but hops for you and me :

I wouldn't touch another if I had my private tree—

But what about a nice drop of beer ?



*I've lost my loving-kindness, dear, I've lost my
self-control,*

*And Mabel thinks that what I've got is jaundice
on the soul ;*

*You'd be surprised—this morning I had words
with Mrs. Drew,*

*And many of them words, my dear, I didn't know
I knew !*

*Nothing's been the same since I took up with orange-
juice,*

The slightest thing excites me now, my dear ;

I used to live and let,

But now I seem to get

A nasty sort of itch to interfere.



*I'm not the Christian woman what I used to be before ;
Poor Bert's took up with betting, dear, and I've begun
to snore ;*

*Oranges ? If it's for me, they needn't grow no more—
But what about a healthy drop of beer ?*

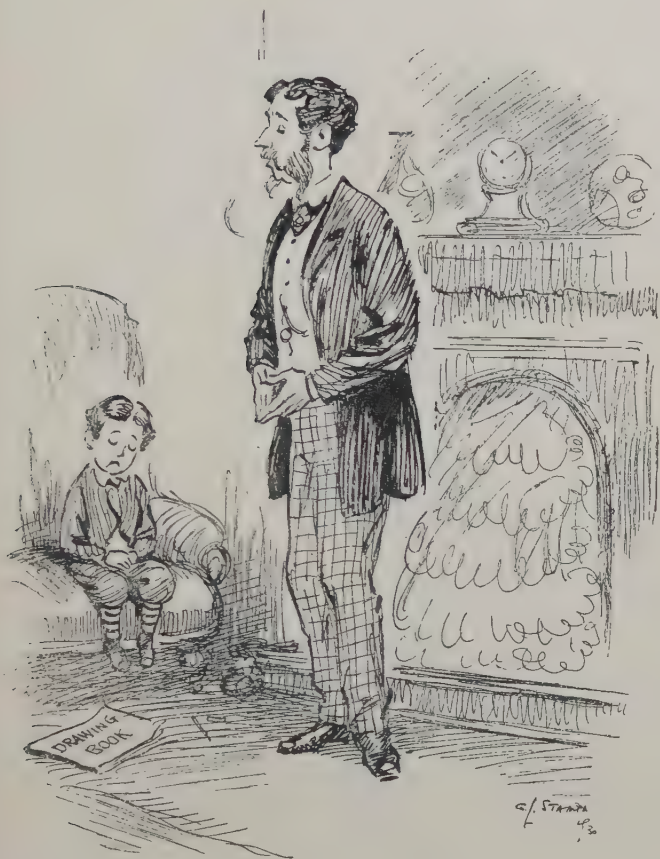
LINES FOR A WORTHY PERSON WHO
HAS DRIFTED BY ACCIDENT INTO A
CHELSEA REVEL

IT is a very curious fact
That those who write or paint or act,
 Compose or etch
 Or sculp or sketch,
Or practise things like pottery,
Have not got consciences like us,
Are frankly not monogamous ;
 Their moral tone
 Is all their own,
 Their love-affairs a lottery.
It's hard to say why writing verse
Should terminate in drink or worse,
 Why flutes and harps
 And flats and sharps
Should lead to indiscretions ;
But if you read the Poets' Lives
You'll find the number of their wives
 In fact exceeds
 The normal needs
 Of almost all professions.
As my poor father used to say
 In 1863,
Once people start on all this Art
 Goodbye, moralitee !
And what my father used to say
 Is good enough for me.

Oh, may no little child of mine
 Compose or model, draw, design,
 And sit at ease
 On people's knees,
 With other odious habits !
 See what eccentric things they wear,
 Observe their odd un-English hair—
 The women bald,
 The men (so-called)
 As thickly furred as rabbits !
 Not these the kind of people who
 Were prominent at Waterloo,
 Not this the stock
 Which stood the shock
 When Kaiser picked his quarrel.
 Let Dagoes paint and write and sing,
 But Art is not an English thing ;
 Better be pure
 And die obscure
 Than famous but immoral !

As my poor father used to say
In 1863,
Once people start on all this Art
Farewell, monogamee !
And what my father used to say,
And what my father used to say,
Is good enough for me.

And shall we let this canker stick
 Inside the body politic ?



Oh, let us take
 Some steps to make
 Our messy nation cleaner !
 The whole is greater than the part,
 We should at once prohibit Art,
 Let Music be
 A felony
 And Verse a misdemeanour ;
 Let long-haired gentlemen who draw
 Be segregated by the law,
 And every bard
 Do six months' hard
 Who lyrically twaddles,
 But licences be issued to
 A few selected curates, who
 Shall fashion odes
 In serious modes
 On statutory models.

As my poor father used to say
In 1863,
Once people start on all this Art
Farewell, moralitee !
And what my father used to say,
And what my father used to say,
And what my father used to say,
Is good enough for me.

NOTE ON THE WRITING OF FRENCH POETRY

THE "Chanson du Lizard," which follows, should have a Message for all cruising yachtsmen, though its particular appeal must be to the passengers and crew of the yacht *Lizard*. It may have no point for others, but I do not care; I print it here because I am proud of my French verse, and I am proud of that because I know very little French. Also, I wish to show up the French poets. I have discovered that the writing of French verse is much easier than the writing of English verse (or French prose); and, given a thorough knowledge of the French language, it must be child's play. Rhymes are more plentiful (especially in the department of love), and the most bald and banal statement has a kind of spurious distinction when put into French. I made the discovery when I audaciously burst into French lyrics for Sir Nigel Playfair's production of "La Vie Parisienne." Take, for example, the stanza:

"Paris, c'est l'amour
Et l'alimentation,
Manger toujours
Et toujours la passion—
Meals and misses
Bocks and blisses,
Cooking and kisses—
Ça c'est Paris."

The first four lines are, so they tell me, profoundly true; but also they seem to me to have a poetical

ring which the assertion contained in them scarcely deserves. The succeeding lines, in which the squalid theme is restated in brutal English, are technically as good, but they do not *sound* so good.

Take, again, the final chorus :

“ À quoi bon
L’ambition ?
Ça ne vaut pas la pein-e.
Donnez moi
Baiser—ma foi,
Je suis roi et rein-e !

Jamais la jeuness-e
Sera de retour ;
Mort à la tristess-e,
Et viv-e l’amour !”

Here the thought is not, perhaps, startlingly original, and some of the French may be erroneous ; but the sound is fine. The same bare thought, neatly expressed in English verse, would not have the same effect. But continental poets have been building up a reputation on this kind of thing for centuries. Given a knowledge of French, a light heart, and a generous sprinkling of the word “amour,” I believe that anyone could do it. If I am wrong, show me a French poet who could write a passable lyric in English. If I am right, it follows that some of our serious English poets, who show a strange incapacity for metrical composition in their own tongue, might be well advised to express themselves in the easier language of the French.

I write all my French poetry without aid except a Handy Dictionary ; but I asked a French girl to

“vet” my lyrics for this production. She could speak no English and I very little French, and since we were almost unable to converse in French prose, the discussion of my French verse was difficult. She found several dreadful wrong genders (which took me four or five days to correct), but she said that my lyrics were “très spirituel”; and I think she was right.

CHANSON DU LIZARD

"À TERRE NOUS ALLONS!"

Story of the Poem.—Yacht "Lizard" is cruising along coasts of Brittany. Owner's Wife detests ocean, and yacht, like most yachts, spends more time in harbour than at sea. When in harbour, Owner, who is a Brigadier-General, has strange passion for visiting remote churches and ruins on hot afternoons. Owner's Wife prefers "*rester tranquille*" in "Lizard." Owner's Wife detests expeditions and ruins, especially the large stones left about the countryside by Druids. And see the "Note on the Writing of French Poetry."

*ALLONS, allons un peu plus loin !
Il faut trouver un joli coin
Où l'Océan ne troubl-e¹ point—
Ha, ha ! le brav-e "Lizard" !*

Les vag-ues et les vents,
Les rochers et les îl-es,
Sont toujours évidents—
Mon Dieu ! c'est difficil-e !²

¹ For the benefit of those not accustomed to sing in French, I have emphasized with hyphens the strange French custom of sounding final "e." When inconvenient it is not done. So French.

² Whenever a Breton fisherman is asked for information about channels, etc., he replies "C'est assez difficile," and goes away.

Le Général préfèr-e
Regarder les pierr-es,¹
Allons, allons à terr-e,
À terr-e nous allons !

*Allons, allons ! un peu plus loin,
De port à port, de coin à coin,
Où l'Océan ne troubl-e point—
Ha, ha ! le brav-e “ Lizard ” !*

Qu'est-il de plus sublim-e
Que d'aller à la voil-e—
La vi-e maritim-e,
Les phar-es, les étoil-es ?
Moi-mêm-e, je préfèr-e
M'asseoin avec mon verr-e
Mais il n'y a plus de bièr-e—
À terr-e nous allons

*Allons, allons un peu plus loin,
Car je connais un joli coin,
Où l'Océan ne troubl-e point
Ha, ha ! le brav-e “ Lizard ” !*

Mon brav-e Général
Veut s'promener à l'Ouessant,
Par un petit chenal
Qui est tres intéressant ;

¹ *I.e.*, Les dolmens, menhirs, cromlechs, etc., qui se trouvent en Bretagne et excitent l'Owner formidablement, mais pas sa famille : ni moi non plus.

CHANSON DU LIZARD

Mais sa femm-e préfèr-e
 Rester dans la rivièr-e;
 Nous restons donc à terr-e,
 À terr-e nous restons!

Demain, peut-être, un peu plus loin!
Mais je connais un joli coin
Où l'Océan ne troubl-e point—
Ha, ha! le brav-e "Lizard"!

Il n'y a pas assez d'eau,¹
 Mais il y a trop de vent,
 Allons à Concarneau!
 C'est mieux que l'Océan.
 Il y a une forte odeur,
 De poissons et d'pêcheurs,
 Elle ne nous fait pas peur,
 À terr-e nous allons!

Allons, demain, un peu plus loin!
Quel' senteur a ce joli coin!
Mais il est tranquille, néanmoins—
Ha, ha! le brav-e "Lizard"!

Marchons aux magasins!²
 Nous n'avons plus de poissons,
 Nous n'avons plus de vin,
 Nous n'avons plus de croissants;³

¹ After anchor has been dropped in a strange tidal harbour question is always put to a local fisherman, "Il y a assez d'eau?" Answer is always "Non."

² Shopping is the only part of yachting which really matters. When no other excuse for seeking harbour, Owner's Wife says, "We have no more bread," and that settles it.

³ Rime effrayante? C'est vrai. Mais que voulez-vous?

Nous n'avons plus de glac-e,
Voilà un port en fac-e,
Nous débarquons en mass-e,
La Terr-e, je t'embrass-e,
Et au revoir, La Mer !

*Allons, allons un peu plus loin,
Car je connais un joli coin,
Où l'Océan ne troubl-e point—
Ha, ha ! le brav-e “Lizard”!*

À terr-e nous allons,
Riez, mon Aristide !¹
Et nous, nous visitons
Les dolmens des Druid-es.
La Mer est vaste et vid-e ;
Je n'aime pas les Druid-es,
Mais ils sont plus solid-es—
À terr-e nous allons !

*Allons, allons, un peu plus loin,
Il faut trouver un joli coin
Où l'Océan ne troubl-e point,
Ha, ha ! le brav-e “Lizard”!*

Au brav-e petit bateau
Je lèv-e donc mon verr-e !
Au Général de l'eau,
Aux enfants et leur mèn-e.
Aussi à l'équipag-e²

¹ French cook, acquired at Brest. Very fortunate, as few rhymes to Druides.

² Crew.

CHANSON DU LIZARD

Bonne chance et bon voyag-e !
Adieu, et soyez sag-es,
Évitez les naufrag-es,
Surveillez les nuag-es,
Tenez-vous à la plag-e,
À la plag-e tenez.

*Allez plus loin, mais ayez soin !
Chers matelots, il y a peu de coins
Où l'Océan ne troubl-e point—
Ha, ha ! le brav-e “ Lizard ” !*

BRIEF LECTURE TO A SERIOUS POET

THE writers of light verse have a good title to lecture the serious poets at the present time. It has never been clear to us why light verse, however good, should be regarded as inferior to "serious" poetry, however bad. "Slim volumes" of careless undergraduate gush, formless and, to most minds, meaningless, have always received much more attention from the literary papers than the works of masters of the lighter art, which are generally described as "these gay pages," or "joyous doggerel." The technique (if any) of the serious lads is analyzed with reverent solemnity: but the technique of Mr. Belloc or Mr. Chesterton or Mr. J. C. Squire (in their lighter moods), of Sir Owen Seaman, Mr. A. A. Milne, Mr. E. V. Knox, or Mr. Harry Graham, has never, so far as I know, been mentioned in public, though it is the fruit of immense ability and labour. It is taken for granted; probably the reviewer does not realize it is there. It is just as well that reviewers should remain silent on matters which they do not understand; but this is one illustration of the first main theme of my lecture, which is the Under-Valuation of Light or Comic Poetry. It is not sufficiently esteemed as a difficult and important form of literary art. A Gray can make a reputation with a single Elegy: but a Gilbert has to write twelve Operas, and even then he is not considered to matter so much as Mr. Gray.

This was reasonable enough while the standard of serious poetry was high. We are accustomed to the absurd old notion, first put about by Aristotle, that "tragedy is superior to comedy," which means in these days that a mediocre lament is better than a good laugh. But things have changed. The Comic Muse of this country is in very fine fettle. You will not think so, it is true, if you go to a contemporary musical comedy and hear the incompetent drivel which passes for "lyrics" in most of them, and is accepted without protest, apparently, by the British race, who, having produced Gay and Sheridan and Gilbert, ought to know better. But that is another story, and a long one : the History of the Influence of American Music on English Verse has still to be written. The managers (with one exception) do not want songs now : they want "dance-numbers" : and "dance-numbers" want Jazz : and Jazz music, so far as it wants words at all, wants words without form or substance, rhythm or rhyme. And so we hear "lyrics" of this kind :

"To me you seem the cream of perfection,
 You are so intensely alive,
 I like your style,
 You are the cream in my coffee,
 O Baby, sincerely,
 I love you dearly—
 And say !
 I know a parson
 Who's out of work today."

I have just composed those lines : and I see now they are too good. It is almost impossible to parody

the dance-songs (chiefly American) which are whined, whispered, or wheezed on the stage, screen, or gramophone today. But if we forget the stage and screen (as, alas! we must), the original assertion stands. For very many years we have had giants in this field of writing. The men I have named already (and one or two others) can do the thing as well and as easily as Gilbert (though they have not his theatrical gifts and opportunities), and twenty times as well as Gay. Mr. Belloc and Mr. Chesterton are serious poets (and several other things as well): but for their light and comic verse alone they deserve the largest laurels the country can provide. Compared with Mr. Belloc, Mr. Gay is a novice at the game. This is perhaps the one department of writing in which, as a nation, we can confidently claim that we have advanced, that we are better than our forefathers.

I do not know whether our literary pundits will admit this claim: I fancy they have never considered it, being obsessed by the idea that only the serious gentlemen matter. But will they claim that the serious poets are better than their forefathers?

It is not for me to answer that question. I would not venture to criticize even my contemporaries in their own field of labour. The output does not seem, to an outsider, to be large: but I know that the market is not what it was. Perhaps for that reason, in a sort of despair, they have in recent times increasingly trespassed on our domain: one or two have even ventured to be funny. And here, at last, is our title to lecture them.

We welcome the invaders (I name no names) provided only that they do not let our standards of workmanship down: they may blackleg, but they must observe the rules of the craft. And this, I am sorry to say, they do not do. My contemporaries, the post-war serious poets, are very fine fellows, and have done much fine work. But (now that they have their bouquets) I hope they will admit that, broadly speaking, their distinctive achievement has been their bold, rebellious abandonment of formal correctitude. We know the reasons for that. Inspiration in these wild times comes spouting up with such a force and flow that the narrow formalities of Mr. Keats and others cannot contain it. You cannot make the fierce geysers of New Zealand perform like the fountains of Trafalgar Square. You cannot compress a volcano into a suburban grate. And you cannot enclose a modern poet in rhyming schemes and metrical rules. The verses burst themselves, the rhymes take charge: lines which should have had eight feet swell up uncontrollably to ten or twelve; "parrot" in an ecstasy rhymes itself with "spirit," odd monosyllabic lines fly out like sparks, and at last, as like as not, both rhyme and metre are blown to the winds, and we get a page or two of pure poetry, unconfined by either. What of that? Rhyme was made for the poet, not the poet for the rhyme. Why should not "haddock" rhyme with "buttock" or "Médoc"? It is the spirit, not the letter, that matters. A poem is not a tennis-court, to be marked out in rectangles. Does the wild honeysuckle grown in the geranium-bed? It does not.

Yes, my serious friend, we know all that. It is not, as I have heard men say, incompetence or laziness that makes the lines of your tennis-court wriggle and wander so: it is inspiration, or modernity, or the revolt of youth against the older generation; or you are making experiments in word-patterns, or this or that. If you chose, you could find an exact rhyme for "haddock"; but exact rhymes are "*vieux jeu*", Georgian, Royal-Academical; the tennis-courts of revolting youth are no more rectangular; the service-court is a rhomboid, and the side-lines wander in graceful but rebellious curves across the flower-beds and back. And a nasty slap in the face for the older generation it is.

Yes, my friend, we know all that. And so long as you confine yourself to serious poetry you may (as they vulgarly say) get away with it. But if you are going to be funny, or even light, it will not do. It is the old story. The parson may provoke us to yawns with impunity, but the comedian must hold his audience all the time. This is a very hard school of writing. If *we* set out light-heartedly on a difficult rhyming scheme we must go on with it, and no explosive inspiration, revolts of youth and what-not, will excuse us if we fail. But you serious lads come blustering in and think you can do what you like. You bespatter your pages with dreadful slovenly rhymes, and when we complain, you say that you did it—"for fun"! Nonsense! Now and then we may commit a bad rhyme "for fun"; but if you do it in every stanza the defence wears thin. Then you tell us you are "in the Byronic tradition". That

does not impress us: we are a long way ahead of Byron in this department, and you must be bound by our standards, not his. If you do not, you will presently be complaining that the market in comic verse is a poor one. It is not a matter of narrow pedantry, but of professional honesty. If you announce that you are going to write a poem in long stanzas with numerous rhymes you create a definite expectation in the reader. And if you continually fail to find the right rhyme, because the task is too difficult or laborious, you disappoint and defraud the reader. He may forgive you in your own department, but he will not in ours. It would be a very good exercise for you, my young, rebellious, bubbly friend, to write a series of poems in some strict form, the Ballade, the Sonnet, or the Limerick, perhaps the most difficult of all (queer, by the way, that the amateur nearly always selects that form!). And I would advise you, before you begin, to study humbly the works of Mr. Belloc, grave and gay. There you will find that perfection of form which we old-fashioned fellows still regard as valuable. There is no sense of strain or confinement: everything the writer wishes to say is said: but every word and every rhyme is as precisely fitted into its place as are the stones of an arch. (But perhaps you dislike the pedantic formality of arches, would prefer to have the stones protruding untidily here and there, to express the revolt of youth.) It looks easy, as Mr. Belloc does it, but it is very hard work.

In this "slim volume" you will find much to repel you, a low moral tone, a flippant attitude to serious

problems, some feeble efforts for fun, and almost no attempt to elevate or instruct. But none of the gross faults you will find can be put down, I think, to lack of care, conscience, or industry. I will not tell you how many days of hard labour each wretched little piece demanded: you would say it was time wasted, and the information would not interest anybody else. I only mention the odious topic of work because, to be quite frank at last, my friend, I suspect, in spite of all your fine defences, the real truth is that you serious lads are rather *lazy*.

One reason, my friend, why I want you to be a little less modern and sprawly and careless is that I hope you will write us some *songs*. We have a wealth of poets, yet we produce almost nothing in the way of native song or light opera. Surely the English race has not said its last word in the line of lyric drama. You, with your poetical gifts, fine thoughts and modern fancies, might open a new vein. But you will have to be more direct and singable and understandable: and of, course, you will have to work. Don't tell me there are no good composers—there are rows of them. I cannot promise that you will receive much immediate encouragement from the London managers (one, again, excepted). But that should not deter a bold boy like you. Even Jazz will have its day, and the English lyric will be heard again. Sit down now, and write “ACT ONE.”



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